

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Lithuania

SUBJECT City Description - Siauliai

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1. [redacted] I lived in Siauliai (55°45' N 23°20'E), which at that time had a population of about 35,000 people. I have prepared a freehand sketch of the city. The annotations refer as follows.

1. The junction railroad station of Šiauliai.
 - a. From the southwest the railroad comes through Taurage from Germany.
 - b. From the south -- through Radviliškis from Kaunas and Vilnius.
 - c. From the southeast -- through Radviliškis from Panevezys.
 - d. From the north -- through Joniškis from Riga.
 - e. From the northwest -- through Mažeikis from Liepojaus.
 - f. From the west -- through Telšiai from Klaipeda.
 - g. From the east -- from Biržai.

Remarks: This branch of the railroad is serviced exclusively by local inhabitants since it does not have connections with other railroads. The width of the tracks is narrower than that of standard railroads.

2. The freight depot and warehouses of Siauliai. The capacity of the warehouse is not small; it services not only the town of Siauliai but also the wholesale dealers who allot goods to almost all of Zemaitija /area of lower Neman/ and the narrow railroad region of Siauliai-Biržai.
3. The repair shops of the Siauliai railroad were the second largest in size in Lithuania up to 1940.
4. The Institute of Commerce. It is a large modern building. It was completed about 1940. The basements are very good and deep. In war-time, it is suitable for a large staff. The Nazis set up a military hospital there.
5. Secondary School. A building of old-fashioned architecture; it has no cellar. It is suitable for hospitals, barracks, and warehouses.
6. Secondary School. Same as #5.

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[illegible]

7. Courthouse. It is of modern construction and has a deep, strong cellar. It is suitable for the operations of a large staff, hospital, and the like. In 1940, the Communists removed the court offices and in their place set up NKVD offices.
8. Post Office. It is of modern architecture and was completed in 1939. It has a large capacity. The main telephone and telegraph fixtures, and connections with Lithuanian and foreign centers, are here.
9. Local Commandant's Office and Mobilization Office.
10. Catholic Church. With its particularly high steeple, it dominates not only the town, but even the distant vicinity. It can easily be seen with the naked eye from a distance of 20 kilometers. It is an excellent point of orientation for flyers and observers.
11. Prison. (Large buildings)
12. Frenkelis Leather Factory. It is especially noted for its production of shoe soles and other types of heavy leather, and also manufactures soft leather items. Prior to 1920, it dominated the domestic market with its products, and also exported. At that time about 2500-3000 workers were employed in the factory. The factory imported raw materials not only from the USSR but also from Canada and Argentina. From 1920 to 1940, when Soviet markets were lost, production became smaller. It seems to me that only about 350-500 workers were then employed.
13. Nuroko Leather Factory. It is smaller than the Frenkelis factory (Item 12). It specialized in the manufacture of soft leather, especially Sevro [?]. About two hundred were employed up to 1940.
14. Choronzickis Leather Factory. It is smaller than either of the above (Items 12 and 13). It produced mostly for the local farmers' markets.
15. The Angaline Oil (linseed and the like) Factory. It produced edible oils and staining varnish. It was still in the stage of development. Its productivity was small.
16. A large and well known brewery.
17. The suburban railroad station of Siauliai. It was continually becoming more of a freight depot.
18. Large storage of liquid fuel for tanks.
19. A large grain elevator. It is a narrow building which dominates the remote surroundings and can be seen from a distance.
20. The slaughterhouse and meat processing factory and joint stock food company. It produced for domestic markets and export. In all of Lithuania there were six such factories processing carcasses supplied by the entire country. The Siauliai area gave special attention to the meat and dairy industries.
21. Army Rifle Range and training field.
22. Artillery and Ammunition Depots. They are underground and cannot be seen from the air since they are built into the foot of a bluff. The entrances are from the north, the low side.

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23. Barracks -- I do not remember exactly how many buildings there were. Up to 1940, one infantry troop and one artillery group were stationed there.
24. Electric power station. It is located on the bank of Rekiava Lake about four to five kilometers from the city limits. Lithuania's largest peat-bog is located here. The peat is used for fuel to generate steam power to turn dynamos. The station furnished electric power to the towns of Siauliai and Radviliškis, also to the small towns in the vicinity. An extension of the line was started to the town of Panevezys (a distance of about 60 kilometers).
25. Up to 1940, this was a military airfield. One fighter squadron and one reconnaissance wing were stationed here. I do not know if the runways are cement or gravel. During the war, (from 1941 to 1944) the Germans used the airfield for their own purposes. In the beginning of 1944, during the winter and early spring, the Soviet armies encircled one German army somewhere near Čudovo Lake [Lake Peipus?] on the northern front. The Germans fed and supplied ammunition to this army for about three months by means of an air lift from this airfield. [redacted] I watched the planes taking off from the airfield at Siauliai. The planes were heavy and had two or three engines. This airfield is about three to four kilometers from the city limits. In 1941 the Soviets started to build a new airfield several kilometers long, several kilometers southeast of the old airfield, east of the Siauliai-Radviliškis railroad, very near to the railroad. I do not know if they finished building it.
26. The Apskriet [District] Government Building.
27. "Birute" Candy Factory. It is large and has space suitable for warehouses or temporary barracks.
28. An underground telephone cable. The Germans laid it during 1941-1944. It stretches across all of Lithuania along the Tilke-Tiga [Tilsit-Riga] highway. I am not sure on which side of the highway the cable is laid, but I suppose it is on the west side since it was laid on the west side of the highway in Siauliai. I do not know where it begins in Germany or where it ends in Latvia or the USSR. The cable was laid for purely military purposes. At that time it was rumored that the cable had over one hundred channels. The cable was approximately the size of a wrist.
2. The streets of the town of Siauliai are paved with round pieces of natural rock, approximately the size of a wrist of a heavy-set man. The highway through Siauliai is of great strategic importance because it unites, through Latvia, Northern USSR and Germany. The highway is one hundred years old. It has an old and thick gravel draining foundation. Therefore, it can support comparatively heavy weights, even if the surface is not of much value. It is only packed, crushed stone, without any kind of bonding material. The highways to Kuršeniai and Radviliškis were just started. The embankments were still new and the surfaces were soft. They are not suitable for heavy loads. Only several kilometers had been laid out in each direction from Siauliai.

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[Available at the CIA Map Library is a freehand sketch of Siauliai]

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